COPY of a LETTER,

FROM

The Rev. Mr. *FLETCHER*,

At NEWINGTON,

To His FRIENDS

In MADELEY.

LONDON: Printed by R. HAWES,
And Sold by W. PALMER, next Door to the Chapel,
Cumberland-Street, *Shoreditch.* 1779.
[Price ONE PENNY.]

AC 911. 1779. F49

COPY of a LETTER, &c.

My dear Parishioners,

I Hoped to have ſpent the *Chriſtmas* Holidays with you, and to have miniſtered to you in Holy Things; but the Weakneſs of my Body confining me here, I humbly ſubmit to the divine Diſpenſation, and I eaſe the Trouble of my Abſence from you, by being preſent with you in Spirit, and by reflecting on the Pleaſure I have felt in Time paſt, in ſinging with you, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," &c. This Truth is as true now as it was then; as worthy to be received at *Newington*, as at *Madeley*. Let us then receive it with all readineſs, and it will unite us; we ſhall meet in Chriſt, the Center of laſting Union, the Source of true Life, the Spring of pure Righteouſneſs and Joy; and our Hearts

ſhall be full of the Song of Angels, " Glory be to God on high! Peace on Earth; Good-will towards each other, and all Mankind."

In order to this, may the Eye of your Underſtanding be more and more open, to ſee your Need of a Redeemer, and to behold the ſuitableneſs, freeneſs, and fulneſs of the Redemption which was wrought out by the Son of God, and which was applied by his Spirit through Faith. This Wiſh which glows in my Soul is ſo ardent and powerful, that it brings me down upon my Knees while I write, and in that ſupplicating poſture I intreat you all to conſider, and improve the Time of your Viſitation; and to prepare in good Earneſt to meet your God, and your unworthy Paſtor, in another World. Weak as I was when I left *Madeley*, I hear that ſeveral who were then young, healthy, and ſtrong, have got the ſtart of me; and that ſome have been hurried into Eternity without being indulged with a moment's warning! May the awful Accident ſtrike a deeper Conſideration into all our Souls: May the ſound of their Bodies, daſhed in Pieces at the Bottom of a Pit, rouſe us to a ſpeedy Converſion, that we may never fall into the bottomleſs Pit, and that Iniquity and Delay may not be our eternal Ruin. Tottering as I ſtand on the Brink of the Grave, ſome of

of you who ſeem far from it, may drop into it before me ; for what has happened may happen yet. Let us then awake out of Sleep ; let us all prepare for our approaching Change, and give our Souls no Reſt, till we have Ground to hope that our great Change will be a happy one. In order to this, I beſeech you by all the miniſterial and providential Diſpenſations which you have had theſe ſeventeen Years, harden not your Hearts. Let the Long-ſuffering of God, towards us who ſurvive the Hundreds which I have buried, lead us all to Repentance. Diſmiſs your Sins, embrace Jeſus Chriſt, who wept for you in the Manger, bled for you in *Gethſemene*, hanged for you on the Croſs, and now pleads for you on his mediatorial Throne. By all that is near and dear to you, as Men and as Chriſtians, meet me not on the great Day, in your Sins and Blood, Enemies to Chriſt by Unbelief, and to God by wicked Works. Meet me in the Garment of Repentance, in the Robe of Chriſt's Merit, and in white Linen, the the Purity of Heart and Life, which is the holineſs of the Godly, that Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord. Let the Time paſt ſuffice, in which ſome of you have lived in Sin. By Repentance put off the old Man and his Works ; by Faith put on the Lord

Jeſus and his Righteouſneſs: Let all Wickedneſs be gone, for ever gone, with the old Year; and with the new Year, begin a new Life of renewed Devotion to God, and increaſing Love to our Neighbour.

The Sum of all I have preached to you, is contained in four Propoſitions: Firſt, Heartily repent of your Sins, original and actual: Secondly, Believe in the Goſpel of Chriſt, in Sincerity and Truth: Thirdly, In the Peace which true Faith gives, (for all Things are poſſible to him that believes) run with humble Love the Race of God's Commands, before God and Man: Fourthly, By continuing to take up your Croſs, and receiving the pure Milk of God's Word, grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; ſo ſhall you grow in Peace and Joy all your Days; and when rolling Years ſhall be loſt in Eternity, you will for ever grow in heavenly Bliſs and Glory. O what Bliſs! What Glory! The Lord ſhall be our Sun, and our Crown. We ſhall be Jewels in each other's Crown: I in your's, and you in mine: For ever we ſhall be with the Lord, and with one another. We ſhall all live in God's heavenly Joy, in the Heaven of Heavens. All our Days will be a Sabbath, and our Sabbath Eternity. No Bar of Buſineſs or Sickneſs; no Diſtance of Time

Time or Place; no Gulf of Death and the Grave ſhall part us any more; We ſhall all meet in the Boſom of *Abraham*, who meet in the Boſom of divine Love. O what a Meeting! And ſhall ſome of us meet there this very Year which we are juſt entering upon? What a Year! On that bleſſed Year, if we are of the Number of thoſe who ſhall die in the Lord, our Souls ſhall burſt the Womb of the corruptible Fleſh; we ſhall be born into the other World, and we ſhall behold the Sun of Righteouſneſs without a Cloud, and for ever baſk in the Beams of his Glory. Is not the Proſpect glorious enough to make us bid Defiance to Sin and Death, and join the Cry of the Spirit and the Bride, "Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly"—though it ſhall be in the black Chariot of Death.

Should God bid me ſtay on Earth a little longer, to ſerve you in the Goſpel of his Son; Should he renew my Strength, (for nothing is impoſſible with him) to do among you the Work of a Paſtor, I hope I ſhall by God's Grace, be a more humble, zealous, and diligent Miniſter than I have hitherto been. Some of you have ſuppoſed, that I made more ado about your precious Souls than they are worth: But how great was your Miſtake: Alas! it is my Grief and my Shame, that I have

have not been both in public and in private, a thousand Times more earnest and importunate with you about your spiritual Concerns. Pardon me, my dear Friends; pardon my Ignorance and Negligence in this Respect: And as I humbly desire your Forgiveness, so I most heartily forgive any of you, that may at any Time have made no Account of my little Labours. I only intreat such to evidence now a better Mind, by paying a double Attention to the loud Warnings of Providence, and to the pathetic Discourses of the faithful Minister who now supplies my Place; and may God, for Christ's Sake, forgive us all, as we forgive one another. The more nearly I consider Death and the Grave, Judgment and Eternity, the more, blessed be God, I feel I have preached to you the Truth, and that the Truth is solid as the Rock of Ages. I can say, in some Degree, "Glory be to divine "Grace; here is firm Footing, follow me; "and the Sorrows of Death instead of com- "passing you around, will keep at an aweful "Distance:" And with *David* we shall follow our great Shepherd through the dreary Valley, without fearing or feeling any Evil.

Though I hope to see much more of the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living, than I do see; yet, blessed be divine Mercy,

cy, I see enough to keep my Mind at all times unruffled, and to make me calmly willing to resign my Soul into the Hands of my faithful Creator, my loving Redeemer, and my sanctifying Comforter, this Moment, or the next, if he calls for it. I desire your public Thanks for all the Favours which he continually shews me, with respect to both Soul and Body. Help me to be thankful: 'Tis a pleasant thing to be thankful: May our Thankfulness crown the new Year, as God's Patience and Goodness has crowned all our Lives. Permit me to bespeak an Interest in your Prayers also. Ask that my Faith may be willing to receive, all that God's Grace is willing to bestow: Ask that I may meekly suffer, and zealously do all the Will of God in my present Circumstances; and that living or dying I may say, with the Witness of God's Spirit, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain."

If God calls me soon from Earth, I beg he may in his good Providence appoint a more faithful Shepherd over you. You need not fear that he will not: You see that for these many Months you have not only had no Famine of the Word, but the richest Plenty; and what God has done for Months he can do for Years:

yea,

yea, all the Years of your Life: Only pray; aſk and you ſhall have: Meet at the Throne of Grace, and you ſhall meet at the Throne of Glory,

Your affectionate, obliged, and

Unworthy Miniſter,

NEWINGTON, Jan. 1, 1777. J. FLETCHER.

An HYMN

An HYMN.

I.

COME let us anew
Our journey purſue,
With vigour ariſe,
And preſs to our permanent place in the Skies
Of Heavenly birth,
Tho' wand'ring on Earth,
This is not our place,
But ſtrangers and pilgrims ourſelves we confeſs.

II.

At Jeſus's call
We gave up our all;
And ſtill we forego,
For Jeſus's ſake our enjoyments below.
No longing we find
For the country behind,
But onward we move,
And ſtill we are ſeeking a country above.

III.

A country of joy
Without any alloy,
We thither repair,
Our heart and our treaſure already are there.

We

We march hand in hand
To Immanuel's land;
No matter what cheer
We meet with on earth, for eternity's near.

IV.

The rougher our way,
The ſhorter our ſtay,
The troubles that come,
Shall come to our reſcue, and haſten us home.
The fiercer the blaſt,
The ſooner 'tis paſt,
The tempeſts that riſe
Shall glorioufly hurry our Souls to the ſkies.

FINIS.